

THE REPORTER;

O R,

THE GENERAL OBSERVER.

TO BE CONTINUED EVERY FORTNIGHT.

*Ut in vitâ, sic in studiis, pulcherrimum et humanissimum existimo, severitatem comitatemque miscere,
ne illa in tristitiam, hæc in petulantiam, procedat.*

PLIN. Epist. lib. viii. 21.

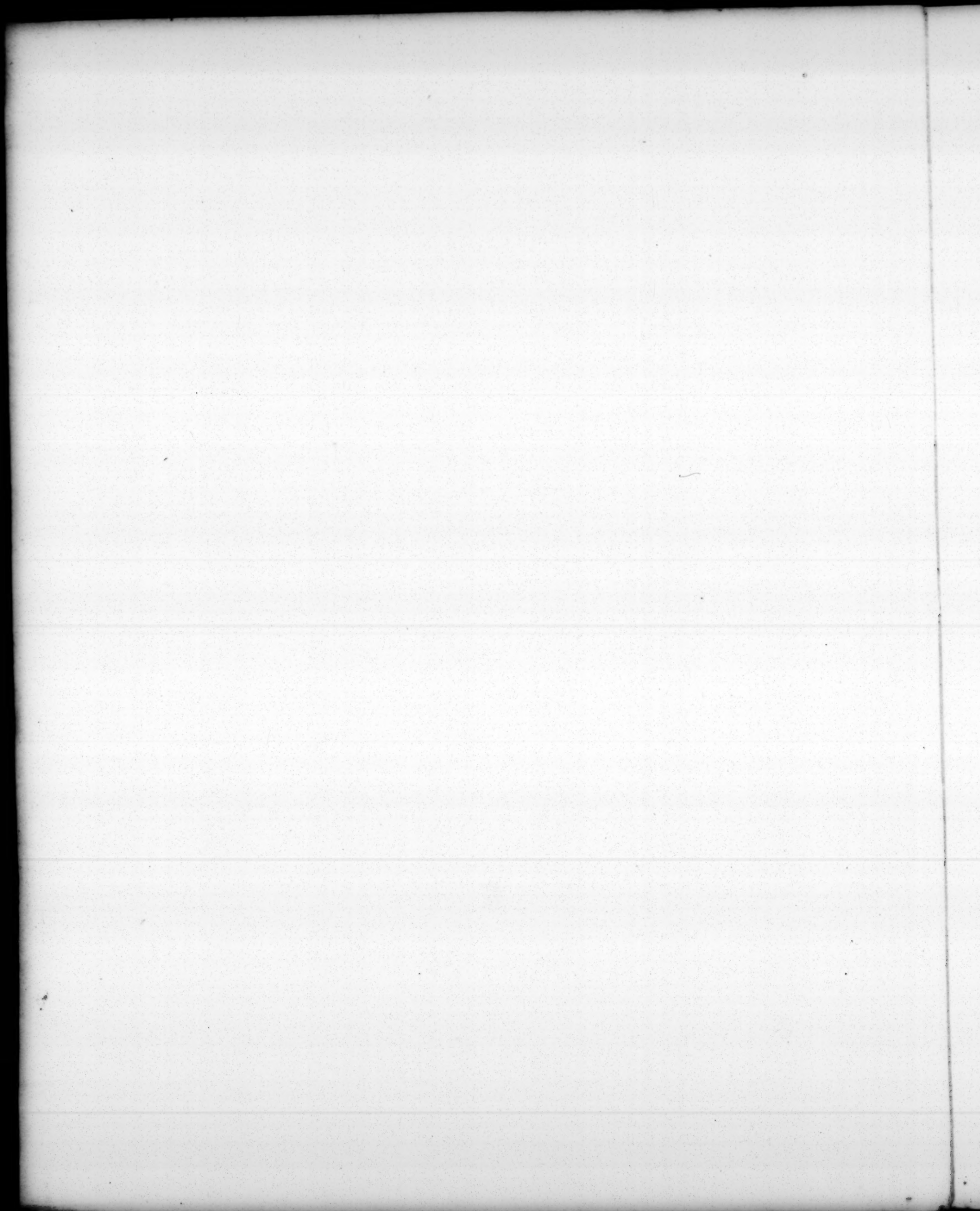
In the concerns of literature, as well as in general life, it is highly expedient to mingle gravity with pleasantry, and to temper each in such a manner, that the one may not degenerate into asperity and moroseness, or the other into petulant levity and degrading buffoonery.



L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR THE EDITOR,
AND SOLD BY R. FLOYER, No. 456, STRAND.

1797.



ADVERTISEMENT.

IN different departments of the *belles lettres*, the editor of this paper has offered himself to general notice. He cannot say that he has been highly favored by the public, or that he merits such patronage; nor, on the other hand, can he affirm with truth, that he has been treated with contemptuous disregard. In a pecuniary view, the balance has preponderated against him. He is not, however, so discouraged, as to decline a renewed appeal to the judgement, or rather to the indulgence, of the friends of literature. The success of that appeal he cannot foresee; but, if the result should be adverse to his hopes, he will not bind himself, at the desire of a small party of encouragers, to a long continuance of the publication which he now commences; for, though he is so far from being appetent of profit, that he will prosecute the work with pleasure and alacrity, even if the returns should

merely answer the expenditure, it cannot reasonably be expected, that any writer, beside the loss of that time which he might employ to advantage in professional pursuits, should subject himself to a periodical diminution of his (very considerable) property. The pressure of the times will not allow such romantic indiscretion.

October 5, 1797.

THE REPORTER.

No. I.

OCTOBER 5, 1797.

*Favete, adeste æquo animo, et rem cognoscite,
Ut pernoscat is ecquid spei sit reliquum.*

TER. Prol. ad Andriam.

Favor me with your candid attention to my introductory remarks, that you may be enabled to form an opinion of the probability of future gratification.

AS soon as I had announced my intention of publishing a periodical paper, I was honored with various epistles from unknown advisers, before I had decisively fixed upon the plan which I should pursue. Some of these letters I will communicate to my readers.

TO THE REPORTER.

SIR,

AS I sometimes amuse myself with literary composition, I am pleased with the opportunity which you will afford me of exhibiting my productions in print, by a medium more respectable than that of a magazine. I write both in prose and verse; and the subjects on which I employ my pen are various and abundant. Though you may not think so favorably of my pieces as I do myself,

self, I trust that some of them will be found, even in your judgement, worthy of admission into your repository. I would advise you to devote a part of each number of the work to poetry, as a variety of entertainment will gratify the public. I would also recommend a review of literature, both English and foreign. A third point which I beg leave to suggest, is the introduction of detached anecdotes, ancient as well as modern. These additions to the periodical essay will contribute to form a pleasing miscellany. Submitting these hints to your consideration, I subscribe myself

Your intended encourager,

ACADEMICUS.

MR. REPORTER,

WHAT is it that you mean to *report*? The vices and follies of the time, I suppose: but I don't think the world will pay the least regard to what you say. You may throw out your raillery and satire as long as you please; but others may ridicule you in return, or treat you with—what will mortify you most—total neglect. For my own part, I shall cast an eye over two or three of your numbers; and, if I find them dull, I shall no longer be a purchaser. With this notice I take my leave.

H. FREEMAN.

SIR,

NOT content with being a *Spectator*, you are inclined to be a *Tatler*, and, perhaps, a *Guardian* of female honor. You are a bold *Adventurer*, I must allow; but, whether you are a *Connoisseur*, I cannot pretend to know. You are vain enough to think, that you can hold up a *Mirror* to the *World*; but I doubt whether you can shine even as a *Lounger* or an *Idler*; still less will you be found an intelligent and observant *Rambler*. In all probability, you will be no other than a mere *Trifler**.—Adieu.

INCOGNITA.

* It may be thought unnecessary to intimate, that all the words printed in Italics are the names of periodical papers.

SIR,

SIR,

I AM an approver of your plan, as far as you have sketched the outlines in your advertisement. But there is one part of it which may be thought objectionable by many readers. I mean your political retrospect. The politicians of the time are not very liberal or indulgent to those who differ from them in opinion. Which-ever side you take, you will only please one class, while the opposite party will censure and abuse you, and studiously discourage your publication. It would, therefore, be better for you to abandon this part of your scheme, unless you intend to confine yourself to a mere statement of facts. — You cannot, I think, be offended at this advice, as my motives for offering it cannot reasonably be suspected or arraigned.

MODERATUS.

Before I make a particular reply to the communications of these correspondents, it may not be inexpedient or unseasonable to offer some general observations.

In no former age were readers so numerous as they are at the present period. The disgrace of being unable to read was never more generally admitted, or more severely felt. The vehicles of multifarious intelligence, daily operating on the eagerness of curiosity, produce, in many individuals, a desire of obtaining, even in the age of adolescence, that elementary knowledge which their parents did not provide for them in their puerile years. Every unoccupied house is pregnant with different species of information; and the walls may be said to *speak* to the public, with less violation of truth, and with less metaphorical licentiousness or absurdity, than the *stones* were said to *dance* to the sound of the Grecian lyre, touched by the hand of Amphion.

From the multiplication of schools, the attainment of primary instruction is easy and inexpensive. It is within the reach of the lowest classes of the community; and, to the poor as well as to the rich, its utility is obvious. Every father, therefore, may justly blame himself, if, from ignorance or parsimony, he has forborne to give his offspring such an opportunity of improvement; and some degree of censure is also due to those children, who, however neglected

neglected by the authors of their being, may certainly find the means of acquiring a knowledge of letters, and are yet content to remain in darkness.

Notwithstanding the increase of the number of readers, the age has been stigmatised as illiterate. If we refer the expression to the import of the general absence of *profound erudition*, the assertion is well-founded; and the same remark is applicable to every age. But it cannot justly be said, that the present times are marked with illiteracy, considered as a total or a glaring deficiency of learning. Though a comparatively small number of individuals may deserve the comprehensive praise of deep learning, literary knowledge (partial indeed and imperfect) is more extensively diffused than at any preceding period. It does not, however, display its effects in improving the ordinary diction of life; for a great proportion of those who fill the middle and lower stations, in the metropolis and in other flourishing towns, speak with that grossness of impropriety which few would expect to find even in the language of the rude tenants of the hamlet, or of the barbarous wanderers of the forest.

The want of sufficient leisure obliges the majority of readers to content themselves with the survey or the perusal of short works and superficial pieces. Their accustomed occupations prevent them from entering the *penetralia* of classic lore, or passing through a complete course of the *belles lettres*; from pursuing the mazes of theology, or fathoming the depths of philosophy. Thus restricted, they can only make short excursions in the regions of literature. But, as Horace observes,

Est quâdam prodire tenus, si non datur ultra.

Some advances may be made, though opportunities of great progress may not be afforded.

Such readers may amuse themselves with the light sallies of poetry, improve their minds with manuals of morality, augment their stock of information by the aid of historical abridgements, and seize, in the fugitive prints, the passing politics and diversified incidents of the times. And, as extensive erudition is not always productive of felicity, they have as fair a prospect of general happiness amidst these pursuits, as the votaries of more dignified and systematic study.

Under

Under these circumstances (to use parliamentary expressions), periodical papers are particularly calculated to *meet the exigencies* of the public. They may, when properly conducted, usefully supply the place of elaborate disquisition, minute and erudite investigation, ample and scientific discussion. They may furnish seasonable hints for the reformation of manners; perspicuous precepts and illustrative examples; surveys of art and of nature; and a multifarious assemblage of topics of probable attraction.

With regard to the intent and design of the present publication, the editor cannot affirm, that the plan of the essential part, or body of the work, is altogether novel. The Reporter, like the Spectator, will venture to give moral directions to persons of both sexes: he will endeavour to mark the rocks on which many vessels have been wrecked, point out the shoals of error, and trace the depths of guilt: in other words, he will act as a pilot in the voyage of life. He will display the pernicious influence of unrestrained passions, and the beneficial effects of deliberate reflexion and provident caution. He will make a faithful *report* of the vices and follies of the age, and of the thoughts which occur to him in the adjustment of the means of correction or restraint. He will vary the scene by passing 'from grave to gay, from lively to severe;' and will be, as far as his limited powers will allow,

'Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,
'Intent to reason, or polite to please.'

Criticism, applied to various subjects of polite literature, will reinforce his fund of remark. Fictitious narratives will sometimes be introduced; and it will be the aim of the writer to render them the vehicles, not merely of amusement, but also of instruction. Anecdotes will be interwoven with the essays; and such miscellaneous points as cannot conveniently be classed under distinct heads, will form a part of the performance. Whether the focus into which these scattered rays will be concentrated, will warm and animate such as may be exposed to its operation, or prove dull, languid, and inert, must be left to future determination.

The appendages to the regular paper now demand notice. From the length of the interval between the progressive numbers, some additions to the original plan of works of this kind will probably be thought requisite. To answer this

reasonable expectation, the Reporter will occasionally advert to the concerns of politics, and exhibit a cursory statement of the most remarkable occurrences of a public nature, accompanied with such observations as the subject may seem to require; and he will also review the affairs of the drama; an object which is certainly of some importance, in a work adapted to the times. Historical and biographical sketches, and striking *traits* of character, may not improperly be added: geographical and other *memoranda* will not be neglected as useless; and poetical essays, not lavishly multiplied, will form an appendage to which few readers will object.

By this enumeration of particulars, the writer of the first epistle inserted in this paper will perceive, that only one article recommended by him is excluded. The admission of a regular review of the productions of the press would be an encroachment on the occupation and the interests of the monthly critics, who have established their claim to public approbation. To the second and third correspondents it will be sufficient to intimate, that the Reporter only wishes for encouragement while he appears to deserve it, and that they have a right to doubt his competency of qualification for the task which he has undertaken. The suggestions of the other writer may be answered with an assurance of the editor's determination of forbearing all reflexions calculated to give offence. He disclaims all connexion with the zealots of either party; and flatters himself that he is influenced, in his political opinions, by a spirit of justice and moderation, which he would wish to find universally prevalent.

C.

A CHARACTERISTIC SKETCH.

HINTS RESPECTING THE CHARACTER OF THE LATE MR. BURKE.

No person will deny that this senator possessed shining talents. His animated eloquence flowed copiously on every subject of politics, legislation, and civil œconomy: but it was too diffuse and declamatory, and was frequently *outré* and hyperbolical; and we may add, that it was rarely strengthened by cogency of argument. His merit as an author was unquestionably great; but the imperfections of his oratory entered into his literary compositions.

The

The gentleman who announced his death to the world, and took that opportunity of panegyrising his merits, informs us, that, 'in his practice [of policy], he 'always regarded, with *holy reverence*, the institutions and manners derived from 'our ancestors.' Who would suppose, that this assertion was intended to refer to a man of *transcendent powers*, and *extensive knowledge*, enlightened with the wisdom of the eighteenth century? The reader of such a passage would rather be inclined to imagine, that it related to some priestly bigot of the darkest times, who justified corruptions and revered abuses, because they were marked with the rust of antiquity. If former statesmen had entertained such absurd prejudices, we might still have been in the same state of barbarism in which Julius Cæsar found the Britons. To complete our astonishment, it is gravely stated, that Mr. Burke was a votary of 'true philosophy.' But we cannot consider that person as a true philosopher, who would sanctify errors and perpetuate grievances.

Speaking of the talents and attainments of Mr. Burke, the encomiast observes, that 'they were long the glory of his country, and the admiration of Europe; 'and might have been (had it so consisted with the inscrutable counsels of 'Divine Providence) the salvation of both.' Whether the illustrious defunct was animated with a desire of contributing to the real benefit of his compatriots, or the general welfare of the European states, may at least be considered as problematical; or, if we admit that he was sincerely desirous of promoting such purposes, we may question the propriety and the eventual tendency of the means which he proposed for their accomplishment.

We shall not dispute the assertions of the purity of his private character; but shall merely hint a doubt, whether his acceptance of a large pension from an impoverished community, for services of a questionable nature, was consistent with the dignified pride of disinterested patriotism.

SKETCH OF RECENT POLITICAL OCCURRENCES.

THE political hemisphere is in a state of great perturbation. A revolutionary spirit prevails in various parts of Europe, being promoted, rather than checked, by the efforts which have been made for its extinction. The French, who were the original disseminators of this spirit, do not enjoy that internal tranquillity, which, after the lapse of five years of agitation and disorder from the erection of the republic, is necessary for the confirmation of their new government.

About the beginning of the last month, Barras, Rewbell, and Reveillère-Lepaux, members of the directory, gave orders for the execution of a scheme which they had secretly concerted. Troops, which, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the legislative body, had gradually approached Paris, entered the city in the night, and seized many individuals of the moderate party. The two councils, assembling under the influence of terror, acceded to the wishes of the triumvirate; and it was decreed, that Barthélemy and Carnot (the two other directors), and sixty-five of the senators and their friends, should be banished from France, for having planned the restoration of monarchical sway. It is remarkable, that no blood was shed on this occasion by the triumphant faction; a circumstance which forms a new feature in the French revolution.

The advocates of the directorial party accuse the British cabinet of having clandestinely abetted the aims of Barthélemy and his associates; but they are unable to substantiate this charge; nor has sufficient testimony been adduced of the reality of the conspiracy, though it is probable that Pichegru, Camille-Jordan, and other persons of influence in the senate, were not indisposed to the cause of the claimant of the French crown.

The conduct of Barras and his two colleagues, in violating the constitution by the introduction of troops into the capital, in withholding the benefit of a legal trial from the *supposed* conspirators, and in enforcing the exile of those who were not *convicted* of delinquency, cannot be vindicated by the friends of law and justice.

Those

Those who obtained this easy victory over the legislature, soon put an end to the negotiations which had been long depending between France and Great Britain. Lord Malmesbury was requested to agree to the demand of a complete restitution of the conquests made by his countrymen; and, when he stated the necessity of consulting his employers on a subject of such importance, he was commanded to quit the French dominions. The court afterwards thought proper to send a messenger to the continent with new offers; but, as these proposals were inadequate to the extent of the French demands, they were wholly inefficacious. The war will therefore be continued, however ruinous and destructive may be its tendency, unless additional concessions should be offered by that court which sued for peace.

A new republic has arisen in Germany. The inhabitants of Cologne, Coblenz, and other towns on the western side of the Rhine, have formed a distinct government, under the title of the Cis-Rhenane republic. The acquiescence of the directory in this establishment may induce us to suppose, that the preliminaries adjusted between the French and the emperor will not be speedily productive of a pacification, as one of the provisional articles respected the integrity of the Germanic body. Dreading a progressive violation of that system, some of the circles have solicited the interference of the Russian sovereign, who will probably exert his influence in support of the constitution of the empire.

REVIEW OF THEATRICAL AFFAIRS.

THE last season, at the Hay-market theatre, was not distinguished by a profusion of novelties. Two new pieces, however, were brought forward at that house in the months of July and August.

The first was the *Heir at Law*, which proceeded from the pen of Mr. Colman. The subject of this comedy may be briefly stated, as the plot is not complex or intricate. Dowias, a low tradesman, assumes the title, and takes possession of the estate, of lord Duberly, in consequence of the non-appearance of any near relatives

tives of the deceased. By his order, his son Dick repairs to London, in company with Homespun, a rustic, and his sister Cicely, to whom the youth is personally attached. Dr. Pangloss is engaged by the new peer as a tutor to the son, and a corrector of the colloquial improprieties of the father. Dick is no sooner informed by his tutor of the good fortune of the family, than he affects the airs of a man of fashion; and, thinking that it would be a disgrace to him to marry Cicely, he resolves to retain her as a concubine. In the mean time, Morland, the heir at law, returns from America, unacquainted with the death of lord Duberly, or with the unfortunate situation of Caroline Dormer, the object of his affection, who, by the loss of her father, and the failure of her banker, has been reduced to poverty. While he is preparing to assert his claim, Cicely, who had entered into the service of his mistress, is gratified with a promise of marriage from her repentant swain. The claim of the heir is allowed; and he gives his hand to Caroline.

There is a greater degree of merit in the dialogue, than in the contrivance of the plot. Ease, vivacity, humor, and sometimes wit, appear in the different scenes; and pleasing effusions of sentiment are interspersed. The illiteracy and vulgarity of a petty trader are not ill represented: the pedantry and servility of a private tutor are displayed in a humorous manner, but with some improbability in the former instance: ingenuous simplicity and friendly zeal are evinced by Homespun and his sister; but they bear too strong a resemblance to Frank and Jeffy Oatland, in the comedy of the Cure for the Heart-Ache. Suett seemed *au fait* in the exhibition of old Dowlas: Pangloss found a skilful representative in Fawcett; and Munden performed the part of the countryman in an appropriate style; but Mrs. Gibbs was less rustically correct, though she succeeded in the expression of feeling. In the part of young Dowlas, Palmer was spirited for his years; and he aped the bucks of Bond-street with some effect. In the character of Kenrick, the Hibernian attendant of miss Dormer, Johnstone did not surpass mediocrity; nor did miss De-Camp shine in the representation of Caroline. The comedy was received with applause; and it was performed for the twenty-eighth time before the re-opening of the winter theatres.

The other piece, styled the Italian Monk, owes its theatrical existence to Mr. Boaden. As this writer had borrowed the subjects of two former pieces from the
popular

popular fictions of romance, it was immediately concluded, from the title which he had chosen, that Mrs. Radcliffe's *Italian* furnished the ground-work of his recent drama. Those who formed that conjecture were not deceived, as the first scene introduced Vivaldi, one of the principal characters of the romance, disclosing to his attendant Paulo his passion for Ellena.

The leading incidents of the romance are preserved in the play, with little diminution of effect. The character of the monk Schedoni is well sustained. Ambitious, artful, and unprincipled, he is ready to undertake the most atrocious schemes of iniquity, while he affects a regard for honor and justice. Vivaldi is a young, empasioned lover, brave, upright, and ingenuous; and Ellena appears in all the pride of virtue, firm in her purpose, and inflexibly attached to one whom she deems worthy of her affection. Anfaldo is a benevolent monk, who promotes the interest of Vivaldi, and aims at the reformation of Schedoni. Paulo is a lively, pleasant, honest fellow, warmed with the purest zeal in the cause of his master.

Between the drama and the romance, however, there are some important variations. In the hands of Mrs. Radcliffe, Schedoni is condemned to death for the murder of his brother, and poisons himself in prison; but, by an alteration not injudicious, as the piece was not intended for a tragedy, he is brought to a due sense of his guilt, and his life is preserved. Anfaldo and Nicola are combined into one character by Mr. Boaden: Ellena is, in the play, the daughter of Schedoni, instead of being the child of his brother; and Spalatro, the accomplice of the monk, is accommodated by the dramatist with a wife, and with a daughter who is married to Paulo.

Of the performers, Palmer was the most distinguished. He had a just conception of the character of Schedoni, and embodied it with great energy. The piece, upon the whole, is well written; but it does not abound with striking beauties. Some pleasing airs are introduced; and the ballad of Mary, with which Mr. Colman gratified his friend, is particularly impressive.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

SONNET TO CONTEMPLATION.

HAIL, Contemplation! soother of the soul!
Fond of thy converse, oft thy steps I've trac'd,
My mind submissive bow'd to thy control,
O'er pathless wilds, and o'er the dreary waste.
By thee the wayward passions all are hush'd;
Subsides the storm of mis'ry and of pain;
All obstacles to silent thought are crush'd;
And Reason holds her unmolested reign.
By thee inspir'd, we scan our wond'rous frame;
Explore each varying movement of the mind;
Judge for what end, for what important aim,
Unerring Fate this mortal race design'd:
But still our finite search can never learn
Nature's strict laws, or Heav'n's high will discern.

INTIMATIONS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The 'Hints of a Friend' are inapplicable to the views of the Editor, and are therefore dismissed, but not without thanks.

The 'Sentimental Tale,' which has been sent for insertion, is borrowed, with little alteration, from a former work. Such an attempt to deceive is very reprehensible.

A 'Letter from a Lady' will be returned at her desire, as it has not met with approbation.

The 'Effusions of a young Bard' do not afford the least promise of eventual merit.

The 'Theatrical Strictures' are too severe; and the 'Political Remarks' are partial and acrimonious.

An Epistle, subscribed with the name of EUSTACE, claims future consideration.

